

January 18, 2007

Kelly Johnson
PO Box 634
Frenchtown, MT 59834

EXHIBIT 33
DATE 1-18-07
HB 2

Dear Madame Chairman and Members of the Committee:

My name is Kelly Johnson and I live on a ranch outside of Missoula in Greg Lind's Senate District. I have a twelve year old daughter named Shelley, who has Down Syndrome. She has been receiving Intensive Family Education & Support Services (IFES) for the past three years through the Child Development Center.

My daughter was born with a heart condition and many other health problems. For years we have been battling chronic ear infections which have spread into her mastoid bone. We applied for Intensive services because the costs of her medical care exceeded our family income, and as she grew older, we found we needed additional supports. Since receiving Intensive Services we have been able to access not only a Medicaid card to cover medical needs but also a Habilitation Aide, Respite supports, behavioral consultations, and supplies and equipment to ensure Shelley's health and safety. Our family very much appreciates and relies on the emotional and technical support we receive from our Family Support Specialist. Her assistance and these services have improved Shelley's quality of life and have positively impacted our entire family.

My family and I want to formally thank each of you and other members of the Legislature for funding this very important service. It has truly changed our lives.

As Shelley becomes a teenager we need the supports and services even more as we begin to deal with her adolescence. She continues to face complex medical issues as well as a variety of other challenges. We are realizing that her needs have increased and will continue to increase as she enters young adulthood. We find ourselves increasingly more dependant on IFES services as we strive to teach her the skills she needs to live independently and become a contributing member of her community.

We are concerned about the rate structure that is being proposed by DDP and about any negative effects it may have on our IFES services. We are currently satisfied with our services and would not want to see them change in any way. We ask that you fully fund House Bill 2 to ensure that Children's Services are maintained at the current level.

I thank you again for your time and hard work. I know that you are committed to maintaining excellent services for children with developmental disabilities in the State of Montana. If any of you wish to discuss these matters further please contact me at 406-240-4801.

Sincerely,

Kelly Johnson + Family

Kelly Johnson and Family

